

around their kitchen table wondering are they going to be able to fill up their gas tank tomorrow morning when they get up and go to work? What about buying that gallon of milk? You go to the grocery store and you see that grocery store prices have gone up 64 percent since the beginning of the year.

Mr. WALBERG. If I could break in, didn't we hear at the beginning of this year, January 4th and prior to that, that if the majority party had control we would see the prices go down on gas and other things? Didn't we hear that? Have we seen that take place?

Mrs. BACHMANN. Well, I think the gentleman already knows the answer before he is asking the question, because it has been now hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of days since the majority said to the American people that they had a commonsense plan, they had a commonsense plan for reducing the price of gasoline. And as of today, the average price of gasoline across America is now a whopping \$3.51.

I went with our family this weekend, we went to visit my father-in-law. It was his 84th birthday on Sunday. So we had my daughter's car, because it had the best gas mileage of any car that we had in our family, so we took her car. On the way back, we were in Baldwin, Wisconsin. We pulled up to a gas station. We put gas in. I could not believe it. It was \$45 that I put in her little gas tank. Just a few years ago, that is what we spent on our big conversion van, our high-top conversion van. We are not alone. We are here as Members of Congress, but we hear this every day from people back home.

Let me give you just one example. You remember Art Linkletter and the show that he had years ago called House Party? He had a little segment called "Kids Say the Darndest Things." I loved that segment.

I thought about that, because just recently I went to speak to Minnesota Pheasants Forever. It is a wonderful outdoor heritage group. I love to do that. That is one marvelous thing about being a Member of Congress, you can go to speak to great groups about things.

So I went to go speak to them. So I laid my notes, Congressman WALBERG, on the island in our kitchen, and it said "Minnesota Pheasants Forever." Our little daughter Caroline came, and she picked up the notes and she said, "Mom, what is Minnesota peasants forever?" And I said, "Well, Caroline, that would be the taxpayers of the State of Minnesota."

The reason I say that is because tomorrow will be Tax Freedom Day, and in Minnesota, we are a little bit worse off. Our Tax Freedom Day won't occur until next Sunday.

What that means for people across America that might be listening to our repartee as we go back and forth tonight, Tax Freedom Day is the first day the American people stop working

for Uncle Sam and start working for themselves. When you average all your Federal, State and local taxes together, the American taxpayer spends the first 113 days of the year as a Federal employee. Basically, that is what it comes down to. We are all Federal employees because we are working for the man. We are not working for ourselves.

Mr. WALBERG. And that is not the idea that the framers of our Constitution had in mind.

Mrs. BACHMANN. That is exactly right. You talked about Adams and Jefferson. We have the wonderful privilege, you and I and Congressman DAVIS, we have the wonderful privilege of being a part of that great cloud of witnesses that went before. They laid down the freedom.

Just think, it was a stamp tax that our founders were willing to lay down their lives for, their fortune, their sacred honor. They were willing to give up everything, just to throw off a stamp tax. My goodness, we do that just in the morning before we have even gotten to lunch yet around here. I can't believe the level of tax increases we have seen, can you?

Weren't you floored coming here as a new Member of Congress? I know if there is one thing that I have learned, Congressman WALBERG, in the time I have been in Congress, what has been now maybe 15 or 16 months, it has been how easy it is to spend somebody else's money. How easy it is. I know it isn't for me. It is really hard for me to spend my own money, and it is really hard for me to spend other people's money. I am not there yet. I haven't drank that Kool-Aid. But I am floored when I see how easy it is for Members of this body to spend other people's money. What is your reaction to that?

Mr. WALBERG. Well, it is very similar, if I might add, to see how large expenditures go out with so little oversight, and so much statement that, oh, well, it has to be done. If we don't do it, who will? And there are so many needs.

Well, there are. I mentioned earlier this evening I had the opportunity to attend a breakfast fundraiser for Boys and Girls Clubs in my area. They do a great work, and they are doing it on the basis of individual contributions, corporate entities that give not only financial support, but also human support as well.

The speaker, a president of a major industry in my area, she said it so eloquently, that it has come to a point in time where we have to find ways to reduce the cost by drawing together and not having redundancies that add cost, but become more efficient and more effective doing not only the same work, but more work for less cost as a result of the effort that is shared.

In government we have to get that concept. We have to understand that there is a person called the taxpayer, and a taxpayer that is not of unlimited resources, especially if we want to keep

freedom around so that our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren will enjoy the benefits we have. If we are to pass it on to them in such a way that they will have equal or better freedoms than we had, we have to get on the stick.

So, absolutely, I have been floored since coming here that it is so easy to spend money in this Chamber without thought of actually who will generate those resources, and we frustrate the engine of the economy.

Mrs. BACHMANN. If the gentleman will yield further, that has been my impression as well. It strikes me to think that the serfs in the Middle Ages paid over about 25 percent of what they earned in the year to a nobleman. We could only wish, many of us, that 25 percent was our total tax burden. We haven't seen that in this country for many, many years. It is almost unthinkable that the serfs in the Middle Ages would be better off from a tax point of view than the average American taxpayer today. We are far beyond 25 percent of our income.

As a matter of fact, don't you agree, Congressman, that it would be I think very enlightening for most Americans to learn that they spend more on their tax bill, they pay more on their tax bill, than they do for food, clothing and housing combined?

The average American works 108 days to pay for their food, their clothing and their housing. They work on average 113 days to pay their tax bill. Just think of that. Those are necessities that Americans can't do without. You have to have food, you have to have clothing, you have to have housing. But the one thing that will happen is that you will go to jail if you don't pay your tax bill.

I am a former Federal tax litigation attorney. I tried a lot of cases in Federal Tax Court. The reason why people showed up when it was time for their court date was because if they didn't show up, the judgment may be that they go to jail. Because in this country if you don't pay your tax bill, you have the potential of going to jail. So that is the first bill you have to pay, because if you don't pay it, you may end up in a place you don't want to be, so a lot of sacrifices have to be made by a lot of people.

I will tell you one thing, and I think you would agree as well, Congressman. You have probably seen a lot of waste, a lot of fraud and a lot of abuse in legislation that has gone through this body. We will be taking up legislation tomorrow that is trying to squeeze waste, fraud and abuse out of the Medicare system.

Don't you agree, Congressman, that is something that the American people have been looking for for a long time? I know you are a reformer. I know you came here because you did not want to be part of the status quo. You are an outsider, and you came here because you wanted to change the way that Washington does business. I feel the